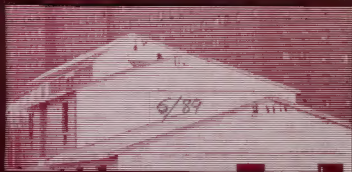


*Newark Redevelopment & Housing Authority*



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**NEW DIRECTIONS**



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Artist's rendition of new townhouse development NJ-219 for the Housing Authority of the City of Newark.

At top, townhouses under construction reflect the NHA's movement in new directions.

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## Introduction

by Dr. Daniel W. Blue, Jr.  
Executive Director, NHA



Nearly five years ago, the Newark Redevelopment and Housing Authority set out on a new course, guided by a well thought out and engineered Master Plan for Improvement. The problems were formidable, but not insurmountable. Our family high-rises were in a state of physical and social deterioration. In addition, the high-density, high-rise approach to public housing had failed to meet the needs of our families. Residents, unaware of the Authority's fiscal problems, had become distrustful of a management they believed had simply grown unresponsive.

Today, we are well along in our efforts to improve living conditions for the more than 30,000 Newark public housing residents. We have demolished four high-rise buildings at Scudder Homes and are about to level five buildings at Columbus Homes. We have completed the construction of 390 townhouses, have 372 townhomes in various states of construction, and have received funding approval for 1,506 new townhouse units as replacement housing.

In response to resident concerns, we are continually improving our Preventive Maintenance and Work Order systems. These computerized systems allow us to register complaints, process work orders, and make repairs on a timely basis. Resident voices are also heard through the Board of Commissioners.

As always, our goal remains the provision of "safe, decent, sanitary and affordable" housing for the lower income and elderly residents of our city. Today, however, we have resolved to add the word "quality" to our mission and the word "pride" to the feelings of Housing Authority residents.



Created by the Federal Housing Act of 1937, the Newark Redevelopment and Housing Authority is one of the largest public housing authorities in the nation and the largest in the State of New Jersey. Between 1940 and 1952, some 3,000 units were built at eight sites within the city. These first units were small garden apartment complexes placed in established neighborhoods. They are still in relatively good condition today.

During the post-war years, public housing often served as a buffer between returning veterans and the private housing market. Public housing construction and mainte-

nance also provided employment opportunities for veterans.

In the 1950's, inner-city land became scarce and expensive while the demand for public housing increased. The result was the introduction of public housing high-rises, with high population densities. It would be years before public housing officials realized that grouping such a large number of families together in such a confined space was detrimental to parents and their children.

High-rise construction continued into the early sixties, when the increasing age of the public housing population brought about the need for senior citizen complexes. Eventually, the Housing Authority owned and managed over 3,000 senior citizen units.

By the late seventies the problems of the high-rise complexes became increasingly apparent. Families lost control over their immediate surroundings. Drug-related crime and vandalism prevailed.

At the same time, the federal government dramatically decreased funding for public housing. Newark's Housing Authority experienced a fiscal crisis that left few resources for high-rise maintenance and social services.

The early eighties saw conditions in the family high-rise developments deteriorate even further and led to a renewed planning process that culminated in the Authority's Master Plan for Improvement in 1985.



## Office of the Executive Director



The executive director of the NHA oversees all operations, including supervision of low-income housing programs, and activities in modernization, redevelopment, new construction, and urban renewal.



The NHA's chief of staff reports directly to the executive director. The chief fills the role of staff assistant and oversees the functions of Planning, Research and Grantsmanship, Public Relations, and Budget units within the executive director's office.

The assistant executive director is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Authority. The heads of the NHA's seven departments; Housing Management, Finance and Accounts, Administration, Legal, Personnel, Modernization, and Redevelopment, report to the executive director through an assistant. In addition, the assistant executive director oversees the operations of the Affirmative Action unit.



## Legal Department

The NHA's Legal Department is comprised of the general counsel, four senior associate counsels and a support staff. The department is responsible for representing the Authority in a wide range of legal matters, such as: reviewing board resolutions and contracts; providing general advice to department heads and employees; giving specific advice to board members and the executive director; handling all litigation and lawsuits; and, rendering any legal opinions necessary in carrying out the Housing Authority's mission.

The Legal Department also works in urban renewal and community development by assessing and approving contracts for the acquisition and disposition of NHA property. In addition, the department initiates and files all landlord tenancy matters for non-payment of rent and cause for eviction cases. NHA attorneys provide training for managers on dealing with eviction situations.

The legal staff has been instrumental in toughening the NHA's eviction policy for drug users and dealers on its property. The department has also worked on a proposed state bill that would further strengthen the rights of housing authorities to remove tenants involved in drug traffic.



## Administration

The Department of Administration is responsible for all contracts, purchasing, warehousing, inventory control, and office services.

In the busy Contract Division, over 100 major contracts are administered and more than \$1 million in progress payments are processed each month.

Purchasing Division personnel are equally busy. They process more than 8,000 purchase orders each year. Purchasing works closely with the Contracts Division and the Affirmative Action Unit.

The chief of the Warehouse Division is responsible for materials management, a 77-vehicle motor pool, and the administrative functions of the central office annex. The Warehouse Division works hand-in-hand with Inventory Control to manage the efficient distribution of all materials.

The mail room, word processing, and print shop comprise the Office Services Division. The clerical staff in word processing also operates the central telephone system, which was recently replaced at an estimated annual saving of \$150,000.

In addition to the above, the director of administration heads a number of committees and task forces, including the Decontrol and the Comprehensive Occupancy Plan committees.





Control and management of all Housing Authority assets is the responsibility of the Finance and Accounts Department. The department, organized into five divisions, administers over one-half billion dollars in assets, with operating budgets for modernization, public housing and urban renewal.

The Accounting Division is responsible for all records and ledgers, and maintains historical financial records.

Tenants' rent accounts are tracked by the Rent Collection Division which works closely with Central Tenancy, development managers, and the Legal Department.

At Central Tenancy, employees prepare summonses for non-payment of rent and maintain the eviction program for the Authority.

Data Processing also falls under Finance and Accounts. This division is working to establish a state-of-the-art management information system that will make Newark a leader in the public housing industry.

Finally, the Payroll Division controls all employee salaries and deductions as well as preparing tax forms for all independent contractors and consultants.



The Personnel Department is charged with maintaining all personnel policies and practices at the Housing Authority, as well as protecting the rights of workers through the administration of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program.

As in any large organization, the lifeblood of the Housing Authority is its employees. They must be professional, courteous, and well-informed to carry out their duties. The Personnel Department helps NHA employees perform well and achieve their full potential.

Each new employee is oriented with NHA standards and regularly receives performance evaluations. Employees working at development sites are now provided with uniforms for security purposes and easy identification. Because the Authority recognizes that an involved employee is an effective one, all workers are encouraged to offer their ideas and suggestions for better ways to carry out their jobs.

Each year, the Authority salutes those employees who have done outstanding jobs at the Employee Recognition Awards Night. Proceeds from the event go to the Newark Scholarship Foundation, which assists in paying for the college education of high school seniors who live in public housing.

The director of housing management is responsible for the management of all NHA developments and oversees the operations of these divisions: Family and Community Services, Security, Central Maintenance, Project Maintenance, Tenant Selection/Section 8, and Relocation. In addition, the Department works closely with the Stella Wright Resident Management Corporation.





## Public Housing Units

1. Seth Boyden Court  
(Complex)  
Seth Boyden Elderly  
(2 units)
2. Pennington Court
3. Baxter Terrace  
(Complex)  
Baxter Terrace  
Elderly
4. Stephen Crane  
Village (Complex)  
Stephen Crane  
Elderly (3 units)
5. Hyatt Court
6. Felix Fuld
7. Terrell Homes
8. Kretchmer Homes  
(Complex)  
Kretchmer Homes  
Elderly (2 units)



9. Walsh Homes
10. Hayes Homes  
(Complex)  
Hayes Homes  
Elderly
11. Columbus Homes
12. Bradley Court  
(Complex)  
Bradley Court II
13. Stella Wright  
Homes
14. Scudder Homes
15. James C. White  
Manor
16. Scattered Site
17. Branch Brook  
Park Manor

## Family and Community Services



The main concern of the Family and Community Services Unit is the quality of life of more than 30,000 NHA residents. Programs supervised by the unit address the human needs of the resident population. Youth, adults and senior citizens are served through a wide spectrum of initiatives in education, recreation, health, employment, and child care.

### Youth

Services offered by the Family Services Unit to young people include athletic programs such as one in which a contingent of NHA residents participate in a national track meet. The unit helps young people become involved in the Newark Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as Boy and Girl Scouts, and sponsors summer bus trips, youth employment programs, and after school diversions.

With the cooperation of area health organizations, teens are offered family planning, pregnancy prevention, and AIDS prevention programs. Family and Community Services is also the primary sponsor of Soul O'House, a drug rehabilitation and education facility headquartered at Stella Wright Homes.

### Child Care

Family Services subcontracts with the Newark Tenant Council to manage four child care centers and one infant/toddler center at NHA developments. These centers

place a priority on accommodating children of parents with the greatest need for day care services. Several spots at each center are also reserved for children designated by the N.J. Division of Youth and Family Services.

### Senior Citizens

The Housing Authority's senior citizen residents can take advantage of the unit's health and information fairs, where area social service agencies visit elderly developments to provide assistance. Health programs, including on-site medical screening, nutrition efforts, and peer counseling, are another facet of Family Services' work for seniors.

In cooperation with Newark public schools, the unit sponsors choir, band and drama performances for senior residents. A small fleet of buses belonging to Family Services regularly takes residents to shopping centers as well as cultural and entertainment events. Arts and crafts and urban gardening programs are also offered.

### Tenant Involvement

Family Services works closely with tenant associations at development sites to support activities that residents themselves have initiated. By supporting these independent projects and conducting programs through outside agencies, the unit seeks to get NHA residents involved in the community at large to avoid isolation.



## Tenant Selection/ Section 8

## Relocation

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The NHA's Tenant Selection/Section 8 Program Unit oversees the process by which prospective residents apply for and are allocated public housing that suits their needs.

An important part of this process is the screening of prospective residents who meet HUD guidelines. Applicants are interviewed, their backgrounds are checked, and they meet with a screening committee to insure that they can pay rent promptly and will not behave disruptively. In the future, the unit plans to include NHA residents on the committee so that applicants may be judged by their peers and potential neighbors.

The Tenant Selection/Section 8 Program Unit maintains a computerized waiting list of the applicants who have been approved to live in NHA housing. The unit tracks and notifies those who are at the top of the list as apartments that meet their size requirements become available.

The unit also supervises the Section 8 Program, in which low-income families receive vouchers or certificates, from the federal government through the NHA, which are used to pay a portion of their rent in private housing. The unit advertises the availability of these certificates, which are allocated for various apartment sizes, and holds a lottery to assign them. Once certificate holders have found private housing, the unit sends inspectors to the apartments to ascertain whether they meet federal standards.

The Relocation Unit is an integral player in the Authority's Comprehensive Plan of Action whereby deteriorating high-rises are being razed and replaced with townhomes and low-rises better suited for family living. The unit oversees the relocation to new sites of individuals and families residing in developments slated for destruction.

The unit maintains a listing of residents to be relocated as well as their space needs. Residents are then matched with appropriate homes as they become available in existing low-rises, or as townhouse construction is completed.



## Central Maintenance

## Project Maintenance



The NHA's Central Maintenance Division is responsible for making repairs on major systems such as heating, water and electrical. These repairs are made by the division's corps of skilled tradespeople that includes carpenters, masons, plumbers, and electricians.

The division is also charged with preventive maintenance on NHA properties in accordance with an annual schedule. In addition, the Central Maintenance Division uses its knowledge of the design and layout of Housing Authority systems to provide advice to the Modernization Department.

All major repair needs are reported to Central Maintenance and expediently fulfilled through a comprehensive work order system. Work order backlogs have been greatly reduced and will continue to decline as the division moves to computerize more of its work order system in the near future.



The Project Maintenance Unit is on call to perform routine repairs and maintenance as needed at NHA housing sites. These jobs are coordinated and carried out by a Project Maintenance superintendent and repair personnel assigned to each Authority residence.

Project Maintenance inspects occupied units on a regular basis to see if residents are taking proper care of their apartments. In occupied apartments are inspected promptly to reduce vacancy turnover time. In all cases, inspections are conducted to insure that NHA properties meet HUD standards.



The NHA is one of just a few housing authorities in the nation that maintain an on-site Security Bureau. Comprised of 89 security officers, 11 unarmed guards, and 15 special police officers dispatched from the Newark Mini-Police Precinct at the Stella Wright complex, the bureau provides around-the-clock protection for residents at all developments. The Security Bureau is also complemented by the Newark Police Department's Housing Police Unit.

Security personnel are assigned to patrol areas on a long-term basis in much the same way as "beat cops" of years past. This helps create a sense of familiarity for residents and encourages one-on-one contact between them and NHA security staff. The bureau also emphasizes resident involvement in making homes more secure.

The Security Bureau also addresses the problems of drug use and drug-related crime. As part of that effort, the Authority has hosted a Law Enforcement Tour and Seminar for law enforcement officials to sensitize them to the realities of drug-related crime in public housing. Acting under recent federal and state legislation, the NHA will move vigorously to evict any resident arrested for the use or sale of drugs on Housing Authority property. NHA is also working with the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) to pass legislation that will make public housing developments "Drug Free Zones."

The NHA's efforts to combat drug use thus far have earned it a national award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Security Bureau also oversees physical improvements at development sites, including fortifying apartment and building doors to deter intruders, and improving lighting in high-risk areas.

The residents of Stella Wright Homes govern the affairs of their own housing complex through the Stella Wright Resident Management Corporation (RMC). This corporation, which supervises the general management of the complex under regulations established by HUD, was born out of the concept that Stella Wright residents could be more responsive than outsiders to the needs of their fellow residents.

The responsibilities of the Stella Wright RMC include renting apartments; facilitating rent collection; maintaining the complex; making necessary improvements; landscaping; and promoting a positive relationship between residents and management. The corporation conducts its operations within a budget using funds allocated by the NHA.

To accomplish its goals, the RMC hires its own management, clerical and social services employees, and holds the right to review the credentials of other building personnel hired by the Housing Authority. The corporation gives preference to Stella Wright residents in its hiring.

The RMC has been especially successful in providing social services for its residents, such as Planned Parenthood lectures, and numerous informational and recreation programs. It was instrumental in the creation of the Newark Mini-Police Precinct at Stella Wright, and acts as host to the Soul-O-House drug rehabilitation program located at the complex.





The major duties of the NHA's Department of Redevelopment/Construction Administration reflect the Authority's dual status as a supplier of low-income housing and as an urban renewal agency.

The Department of Redevelopment/Construction Administration is in charge of acquiring and clearing land for the construction of low-income housing, preparing project specifications for bid by contractors, and then supervising the construction process. The department is one of the major players in the implementation of the Housing Authority's Comprehensive Plan of Action under which decaying, unsafe housing sites are replaced with modern townhomes situated in established neighborhoods.

In addition, the department is using the concept of modular homes—prefabricated units that require a minimum of assembly at the construction site—to create new housing stock. Because they can be assembled quickly, modular units minimize costs for construction and site security. They also enable the Authority to move families into new homes as fast as possible.



As the NHA department responsible for urban renewal activities, Redevelopment oversees urban renewal planning and the acquisition, clearance and disposition of land to private developers. Development projects take many forms: Affordable, middle income, and luxury housing; commercial and retail establishments; and light and heavy industry. Each type of development benefits the Newark community with real estate taxes, jobs, and services for residents.

Projects created on lands acquired, cleared and distributed to private developers by the department include the Gateway complex, the Newark Legal and Communications Center, the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University Newark campuses, and the Industrial River Project, the second largest such project in the nation. Since its authorization as an urban renewal and redevelopment agency in 1948, the NHA has been the catalyst for projects that have resulted in \$1.3 billion in construction and the creation of 6,251 units of new housing.



## Modernization

The Department of Modernization recently became a free-standing department within the Newark Housing Authority and is solely responsible for all capital improvement activities undertaken by NHA. These improvements range from installation of new roofs, to updating boiler plants, to rehabilitating aged apartments.

The department identifies deficiencies in the NHA's housing stock, assesses the dollar amounts needed to correct them, and submits its needs to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for funding under the Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program.

Once funds are approved, the Department of Modernization oversees the initial request for proposals from vendors. It then examines the contractor's plans for the development and monitors their progress as they undertake the modernization work.

The Authority's modernization work was previously carried out under the aegis of departments with mixed responsibilities. The Department of Modernization was created to increase overall efficiency, commit funds expeditiously, and increase accountability.



## Affirmative Action

The purpose of the NHA's Affirmative Action Unit is to guarantee that the Authority provides opportunities for minorities and women in awarding contracts and supervising projects conducted for the NHA by outside vendors in accordance with standards set by HUD.

This unit oversees the NHA's affirmative action program through which 30 percent of NHA contracts are designated for fulfillment by minorities and women. To assist minority firms in competing for these contracts, Affirmative Action hosts forums in which NHA department heads identify contract possibilities in their areas of operation and provide information on the bidding process itself. The unit also explores ways to adapt its contract procedures to promote minority participation. These measures give minority and women vendors the opportunity to demonstrate their competence and to increase their participation in the economic mainstream.

The NHA's Affirmative Action Unit monitors its vendors be sure that they employ a sufficient number of minorities and women on contracts awarded by the Authority. The unit has instituted a number of procedures to measure vendor compliance with HUD affirmative action hiring guidelines, to provide an outlet for complaints about vendor noncompliance, to penalize infractions, and to provide assistance in meeting hiring standards.





The Housing Authority is governed by a board of seven commissioners who set and oversee policy. Appointments to the board are made by the Newark City Council, the Mayor, and the Governor. The board regularly meets twice each month in a work session and a public meeting - and more often if necessary. The executive director of the Authority reports to the Board of Commissioners on the staff level.



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#### **Assistant Executive Director**

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